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S E C R E T BRUSSELS 001255

SIPDIS

STATE PASS EUR/WE BRYAN MARCUS; AF/C HOWARD WOLPE, ADAM
KEITH, AND CHRISTOPHER LAMORA, AF/RSA FOR JULIE CHALFIN AND
MIKE BITTRICK

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/20/2029
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [EAID](#) [EFIN](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [PHUM](#) [SOCI](#) [KWMN](#)
BY, RW, CG, BE
SUBJECT: S/E WOLPE'S MEETINGS WITH BELGIAN MFA AND
DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

REF: A. STATE 94421
[B](#). PARIS 1198

Classified By: Ambassador Howard Gutman for reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

[1](#). (C) Summary: Great Lakes Special Envoy Howard Wolpe visited Brussels August 31 to September 1 to meet with Belgian MFA and Development contacts during a six nation visit to reestablish a transatlantic dialogue on Africa. The Belgians said the DRC, Rwanda, and Burundi were the top priorities of Belgian aid, and the GOB is currently developing new four-year assistance plans for the DRC and Burundi. Belgium hopes to add incentives for holding good elections and improved governance to these plans. The development contacts commented that NGOs working against gender violence in the DRC have been ineffective and suggested the UN take the lead on the issue. The GOB will pursue greater coordination and agreement in the international donor community on assistance packages and policy towards central Africa, and plans to introduce a plan at the next Contact Group meeting. The MFA would like to share these goals with the USG prior to the meeting. The GOB is particularly interested in using aid incentives and political pressure to promote a successful 2010 election in Burundi. The GOB is equally concerned with the certain political decisions that Kinshasa might make that would reduce the chances for successful local and presidential elections in the DRC. Beyond the political situation in the DRC, the success of security sector reform (SSR), MONUC's mandate, and mineral exploitation remain concerns for the Belgium. The GOB and Wolpe discussed the problem of too many regional organizations in central Africa; Belgium said it would continue to support the Economic Community of the Great Lakes (CEPGL), and provide technical training to governments participating in these associations. End Summary.

Introduction

[1](#)2. (U) Great Lakes Special Envoy Howard Wolpe met with Belgian MFA and Development contacts during his six-nation visit to reestablish a strong Transatlantic dialogue on Africa (see ref B para 3 for his message to Allies). During

his August 31 meeting with the Belgian Ministry of Development Cooperation, Wolpe and Poloff met with the Minister's Chief of Staff Bruno Van der Pluijm, Director General for Development Cooperation Peter Moors, and Counselor for Africa Luc Timmermans. The Belgians said their top three development priorities were the DRC, Burundi, and Rwanda. On September 1, Wolpe, Acting Charge Eason, Great Lakes Desk Officer Adam Keith, Poloff and Polintern met with the MFA Africa team headed by Africa Director Renier Nijskens, Minister's Cabinet Deputy for Africa Karl D'haene, Congo Desk Officer Hugues Chantry, and Burundi and Rwanda Desk Officer Stephane Doppagne. The discussion was wide-ranging and focused on the upcoming election in Burundi, local elections in the Congo, the security situation in the Eastern Congo, and regional economic development and cooperation.

Increased Aid to Central Africa

13. (C) Moors said the Congo, followed by Rwanda and Burundi were the top three priorities for Belgian aid. The Ministry was currently engaged in preparing the four-year cooperation plans for both the DRC and Burundi this Autumn; the Rwanda plan will be renewed next year. The GOB will increase government aid to all three countries, and is introducing incentives for desirable behavior. With Burundi, for example, the Belgians intend to increase annual aid from EUR 40 million to EUR 50 million per year and will offer another EUR 50 million as a stimulus for holding a well organized and successful election. The GOB is now looking at possible

sectors and projects in all three countries. Van der Pluijm explained that Belgium has contributed significant funds to NGOs working to end gender-based violence in the DRC, but he expressed concerns with their effectiveness. He opined that the intense media focus on the subject has made it a growth industry among NGOs in the region. He said he hoped the UN would come up with programs to address these issues that Belgium could fund, rather than hit or miss NGOs. Moors said the GOB was very interested in the United States' plan to double aid by 2015.

MFA: Counting on International Cooperation

14. (C) Nijskens welcomed Wolpe's appointment and said Belgium was looking forward to continued U.S. - Belgium cooperation in the Congo. The MFA is preparing a plan for the upcoming Contact Group meeting, and would like to share the document with the State Department prior to the meeting. Nijskens offered a brief outline of Belgian thinking which contained Belgium's goals for the international community: a unified set of development and political goals to work towards; a defined coordination mechanism to achieve them, and concerted diplomatic pressure on the GoDRC to commit to the military portion of security sector reform (SSR) by creating a military coordination mechanism. The Belgians foresee an agreement on a set of one-year, three-year, and five-year goals. The Belgians also suggested that a new coordination mechanism would be best led by the UN, with the assistance of a lead nation reporting to the UNSC.

15. (C) When pressed by Poloff on the direction of Africa policy under the new FM Yves Leterme, D'haene said that Belgian Africa policy would likely follow the same analysis and approach it had under FM De Gucht, though it was clear that none of the MFA experts wished to repeat some of the more difficult periods in Belgian Africa policy of the previous years. He said FM Leterme would meet with the Great Lakes FMs in New York, and reiterated Belgian hope for a meeting with the Secretary at UNGA.

Burundi

16. (C) Chantry said successful democratic elections in Burundi must succeed to set a good example for other countries in the region, especially as an example of good

ethnic Hutu-Tutsi cooperation. He added that good elections would also be positive for the internal security of Burundi itself. Belgium is concerned with hawkish officials trying to change the electoral code without consensus. The Belgian Embassy in Bujumbura views Minister of Public Security Bunyoni's recent effort to take authority for issuing weapons licenses from the Minister of Defense as a way to rearm militias. The GOB thinks allowing both ministries to issue licenses would be more appropriate, and publishing a list of all those with licenses would improve transparency. Chantry also mentioned Belgian information that the CNDD and NDD parties were creating militias; there have been troubling contacts between the FDLR and the FML as well as FDLR and the government of Rwanda. Chantry suggested the international community continue to deliver the message that stability and a successful election were paramount. Wolpe said he thought Bunyoni was reasonable and someone that could be talked to. Wolpe described previous training for Burundian leaders he had worked on and how training on cooperation increased trust and improved the climate during the previous elections. Nijskens commented that similar training would be beneficial to Burundi after the coming election to help party leaders accept whatever outcome.

Congo--Elections

17. (C) The Belgians are also concerned with GoDRC maneuvering prior to the 2011 presidential and parliamentary elections, and the planned provincial decentralization prior to local elections. Broadly, the Belgians are looking for ways to tie good governance objectives to the political agenda. On the presidential elections, the Belgians said they would like the international financial institutions (IFIs) to hold their loans and debt forgiveness until after the election, providing President Kabila an incentive to hold a competitive and legitimate election. They are concerned that the IFIs' rush to grant Kabila a clean slate before the election will give his government free access to funds to use and spend freely prior to the election. They hoped the United States would support Belgium's fiscal rectitude on this point in the face of French and British "looseness". On the local level, the MFA does not support the DRC's plan to increase the number of provinces from eleven to twenty-six. Rather than bringing politics closer to the people, the MFA fears that a greater number of provinces leading to more local governments will divide resources and therefore create more conflicts between leaders and localities for scarce resources. This in turn would reduce stability and security from the MFA's point of view. The Belgians suggested that the international community fund only the local elections but withhold funding for the decentralization process.

Congo--Security Situation

18. (C) On Kimia II, Belgium noted Kigali and Kinshasa's positive public messages and said that the operation is going better than expected. However, the MFA said success is not difficult if no one is fighting as the FDLR withdraws into the jungle to evade offensive maneuvers. The Belgian military confirmed that the 340 dead and 150 captured claimed by the GoDRC was not in fact true; the humanitarian toll was also quite high in terms of internally displaced persons. The Belgians said a political solution to the FDLR problem must accompany the military actions, and for that, Rwanda's cooperation is necessary. Wolpe agreed that a combined political-military solution was necessary and mentioned the need for a special forces battalion that could extract leaders would be more effective than MONUC. He said an addition of 3,000 troops would not solve anything but admitted that no country is offering up a special forces solution. Wolpe also commented that current policy is not achieving goals and people are just being killed; however, no one will publicly criticize the FARDC's operations against FDLR.

19. (C) Wolpe then commented that if there is no political will in the international community to go after FDLR

aggressively, than perhaps MONUC's mandate could be strengthened to allow training of a MONUC special forces unit to go after the FDLR leaders. D'haene cautioned that troop-contributing countries would not stand for a strengthening of the mandate and attributed MONUC's apparent ineffectiveness to these countries' unwillingness to allow their troops to carry out MONUC's already strengthened mandate. D'haene was in New York in July for the last debate over the MONUC mandate and said that for many countries, the MONUC mandate is too far beyond traditional peacekeeping. He then said that military pressure on FDLR needed to continue and that a place must be found for FDLR to go, Rwanda or elsewhere. D'haene mentioned these concerns to DRC FM Thambwe in July, and he agreed there was no clear plan to go forward.

¶10. (C) D'haene then asked how repatriation of FDLR troops could be achieved after an operation against the leadership noting that MONUC was not willing to facilitate returns earlier this year. Another concern voiced by the Belgians was that Kabila might announce the end of MONUC prior to the elections claiming enough had been achieved in hopes of

gaining popularity by ending a relatively unpopular mission.

¶11. (C) Nijskens posed a question on MONUC leadership under Alan Doss. Wolpe said he respected Doss, but had little confidence in MONUC. Nijskens cited a rumored cover up of child soldiers and shortcomings in the MONUC hierarchy that were not reported in New York. Wolpe cautioned it was important to focus on problems rather than personalities in leadership. D'haene noted that many problems were inherited and that after ten years, there was mission fatigue. D'haene also noted that most talented staff have left the widely unpopular mission, partly due to Doss's leadership style. The Belgians criticism at the May 11 Con@ch MONUC provided an upmia II that smacked of nouncement rather than a h successes and setbacks. lled that the first effoQ training program was rla. Instead, trainingh and tenth sectors @@ective solution to nationafhpining. D'haene mentioned@DRC, where he heard comp, that they did not ury was receiving tra carry out maneuvers.QQ-----

¶13. (C) ChQn of economic developmenttion in the Eastern DRchair the October 6 taQtation. On mapping, completely happy with ano complete a comprehensivn certification, Chantractive in the DRC should be asked to cooperate with the DRC administration that does exist and allow them to do thei jobs, rather than wait for a chemical tracin procedure. Finally, on due diligence, Chantry suggested maintaining close contact with Qhe final commodity buyers and finding a way to work with these companies was necessary. Wolpe considered that creating a workable system todeal with mineral exploitation could take a dQcade or more. Chantry repeated his assertion that putting the Congolese administration i front of this process and allowing them to dQ their job was the best and most expedient soluQion.

Regional Economic Cooperation

¶14. (C) The MFA agreed that there were many different organizations with broad and overlapping responsibilities. Belgium continues to support the CEPGL but plans to fund only realistic and concrete projects, whether agriculture or defense. D'haene said that the CEPGL involved only Rwanda and Burundi, but now the Congolese are becoming involved. The GOB would like to see the CEPGL add value. D'haene said a recent Goma meeting between CEPGL defense ministers was productive. Wolpe questioned whether defense was an appropriate subject for an economic organization. D'haene explained that defense was in fact one of the pillars of the CEPGL, and that Belgium would assist if the member countries want to discuss defense issues under CEPGL auspices. D'haene said that FM Thambwe told him the GoDRC would conduct an exercise to determine which of the regional groups were in the DRC's best interests. He also said that the many different regional organizations were a problem for European donors. In addition, there are issues of equilibrium; in the

East African Community for example, Kenya and Tanzania are strong countries, while Burundi and Rwanda are not yet ready

to participate fully. Belgium has been providing technical assistance to the two governments in hopes of preparing them for membership. Wolpe agreed that the many organizations caused confusion and that unfortunately no African state wanted to take the lead to rationalize the regional groupings.

LRA-Kony

¶15. (S) Wolpe said an easy solution was not apparent and suggested that even if Kony and his Lord's Resistance Army were eliminated, there would still be problems in Uganda. He offered that the Acholi remain divided from the government of Uganda and internal divisions would remain a major problem without the LRA. He also said that the many international players in Uganda prevented an easy solution. He confided to the MFA that he viewed the Ugandan offensive against Kony last spring as a disaster.

Comment

¶16. (C) Special Envoy Wolpe's visit impressed our Belgian interlocutors. They greatly appreciated his main theme that the U.S. was ready to reengage in central Africa and would work with Transatlantic partners to solve problems together. The clearest sign the Belgians were excited was their offer to share their Contact Group goals and ideas with the USG prior to the meetings. Post will follow up to ensure that this communication remains open and energized so that the USG can find areas where we can rely on Belgium in working towards like-minded goals.

GUTMAN

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